

## GARDENING

# PUTTING LAWNS IN TRIM

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

**I**F your lawns are like mine, they are a sorry sight, but there is nothing wrong with them that a little attention and an amount of manual labour will not put right. There is no mystery nowadays about the production of fine turf, and this year we will all be well advised to carry out as much of the routine turf management process as we can.

There is much dead grass and debris covering up the sward. On small areas this can be raked out by hand, using a spring tined wire rake. For larger areas a wire rake attachment for a small cultivator makes the job feasible. In areas where there have been heavy falls of snow the turf has been soggy for weeks, and will have become compacted.

On practically all lawns some kind of aeration would be beneficial this spring. On small areas it can be done by piercing with a handfork, making holes about 4in. deep and 4in. apart. Where the area is too big to cover by hand, again there are piercing and slitting attachments for motor cultivators. Or one can purchase a special wheeled chassis, to which all these items of equipment can be attached, which enables one to get over the ground more quickly—it is not power operated.

The fertilizer that we shall have lost by leaching most will be nitrogen, and unless one is prepared to go about the lawn maintenance scientifically and have a soil analysis done, it will probably be worthwhile to apply a good general lawn fertilizer about the end of the month, and then give one or two additional top dressings of a straight nitrogenous fertilizer such as sulphate of ammonia at, say, 4oz. to the square yard. If the turf is known to be rather too acid, then one could use nitro-

chalk, which is a nitrogenous fertilizer that does not increase the acidity. Lawns should always be on the acid side of neutral.

There is not a great deal to report this year in the development of new equipment for looking after lawns. We have a new and remarkably accurate machine for sowing grass seed or spreading fertilizers, lime, top dressing, and the like, and the manufacturers of irrigation equipment continue to present us with new and interesting models for lawn watering. One that appeals to me greatly is a "crawler", a rotating sprinkler that can be set to follow the line of the hosepipe even round bends, and it inches its way almost imperceptibly along the hose until it reaches the end, where it turns itself off.

Then in the motor mowing field we have not seen any revolutionary developments, but the makers of battery operated lawn mowers have carried out certain modifications on their original 1962 models to make them more reliable in use, and we now have battery operated machines in the 14in., 17in. and 18in. cutting widths. For those with large areas of lawn to cut, the motor mower that one can sit upon has been redesigned.

One small piece of equipment that will commend itself to all those who have weed infested lawns is an attachment for a standard watering can, which takes the shape of a T-shaped tube punctured with fine holes that will apply selective weedkiller in liquid form over a strip about 2ft. wide. It is much more economical of the weedkiller fluid than the ordinary rose on a watering can.

After a winter such as we have experienced one often hardly knows where to begin on the job of tidying up the garden, but if the lawn is dealt with, if it is edged neatly and given its first cut in the fullness of time, nothing will smarten up the garden more.

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FROM A CORRESPONDENT.

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